

Minutes of Meeting
State Soil Conservation Board
Indiana Government Center, Conference Room 1
402 W. Washington Street, Indianapolis, Indiana
9:00 a.m., Tuesday, April 8, 2003

Present:

David L. Avery
Karen L. Dehne
Paul J. Ehret
Peter A. Hippensteel
O. William Mann
Travis E. Nolcox
Garry Tom

Absent:

Ellsworth P. Christmas

Others present:

Sherman Bryant
Dorothy A. Corns
Robert L. Eddleman
James F. Farr
Jill E. Hoffmann
James M. Krejci
Susan J. McLoud
Harry S. Nikides
Andrea M. Pierce

James K. Ray
Linda Schmidt
Lynn Stevens
Kent D. Tracey
Wm. Kim Wininger

Chairman Peter Hippensteel brought the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. Division agriculture conservation specialist Kent Tracey requested hearing of the completion report for the Myers Lake feasibility study. Land and water conservation program chief Jim Ray asked to postpone the completion report for the Lake Lemon construction project.

Draft Minutes of March 11, 2003

Garry Tom noted the need for a correction in the report on the Webster Lake Conservation Association's request for redirection of previously approved funds.

Garry Tom moved to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Travis Nolcox and carried.

Supervisor Resignations/Appointments

Conservation program coordinator Jim Krejci presented the recommendation for temporary appointment of Kevin D. Willibey in Steuben. The temporary appointment is necessary because the district failed to meet the deadline for submitting names of nominees for election. Willibey has previously served as a district supervisor and utilizes conservation practices on his grain and livestock farming operation.

David Avery moved to approve the appointment of Kevin D. Willibey until the next district annual meeting in Steuben. The motion was seconded by Bill Mann and carried.

Clean Water Indiana

Harry Nikides reported that he is currently reviewing requests from Tippecanoe and Madison for adjustments to their Clean Water Indiana grants. Nikides stated that he would provide a count at the next Board meeting of the number of districts that have requested grant adjustments.

Soil and Water Quality Programs

Education and SWCD Support:

Jim Krejci reported that Ben Carter will assume duties as conservation program specialist in southeast districts on May 1. Brian Gauck, conservation program specialist for east central districts, remains on military leave through fall 2003. Ed Heckman is filling Gauck's position on a part time basis. Harold Doremire, conservation program specialist for northwest districts, will retire on June 30.

Krejci distributed printed copies of the Education and SWCD Support website pages listing program responsibilities and publications.

Lake and River Enhancement:

Kent Tracey presented the completion report for the Chapman Lake engineering feasibility study (Kosciusko County). Total project cost was \$39,866, with the LARE program contributing \$35,880. An estimated balance of \$3,815 remains to be paid. Using slides, Tracey discussed the study findings and recommendations, which include bank and channel stabilization and retrofitting of storm drains. A LARE-supported design/build project is currently underway to carry out stabilization practices on one lake tributary, and funding for practices on a second tributary is among the grant applications for 2003-2004. It is anticipated that storm drain work will be accomplished through a combination of local and federal funding. The lake association is working closely with the county surveyor and the soil and water conservation district to coordinate and carry out activities. Staff recommends acceptance of the engineering feasibility study report and approval of final payment to the Chapman Lake Conservation Association.

David Avery moved to accept the Chapman Lake engineering feasibility study report as presented and to make final payment to the lake association, not to exceed \$3,815. The motion was seconded by Karen Dehne and carried.

Tracey presented the Myers Lake engineering feasibility completion report (Marshall County). Total project cost was \$15,000, with the LARE program contributing \$13,500. A balance of \$2,846.80 remains to be paid. Tracey discussed the study findings and recommendations, which include channel stabilization and sediment basin construction. The project sponsor, Myers Lake Property Owners Association, is considering various funding sources to carry out design/build actions. Staff recommends acceptance of the engineering feasibility study report and approval of final payment to the Myers Lake Property Owners Association.

Garry Tom moved to accept the Myers Lake engineering feasibility study report as presented and to make final payment to the lake association in the amount of \$2,846.80. The motion was seconded by Travis Nolcox and carried.

Tracey distributed copies and reviewed a letter from the Webster Lake Conservation Association requesting approval for redirection of \$21,000 previously granted to the lake association for a feasibility study of a wetland/nutrient filter. After the grant was awarded, the landowner completed the project using personal funds. The lake association is now proposing to use the funds for feasibility studies of four small-sized wetland, erosion control, and drainage projects. Because no precedent exists in the LARE program involving a change from previously approved actions, Board members discussed at length the merits of the lake association's proposal and the need for policy on making such changes.

David Avery moved to approve the Webster Lake Conservation Association's request to redirect \$21,000 in previously approved LARE funding for the purposes identified. The motion was seconded by Paul Ehret and carried.

Jim Ray presented a summary of unexpended LARE funding for completed or cancelled projects for the period 1989-2003. The available balances total \$257,873.48. Upon State Board acknowledgement of existence of the funds, the Board may choose to redistribute the funds for other LARE uses. Upon the Board's decision, the project sponsors will be notified that funds are no longer available.

Karen Dehne moved to authorize LARE staff to close out completed and cancelled projects with unexpended balances as presented in the amount of \$257,873.48. The motion was seconded by Bill Mann and carried.

Division aquatic biologist Jill Hoffmann presented a Division proposal for developing a database application for managing LARE program financial and technical information. The database was created in 2001; however, an increasing number of inquiries for data from public and private sectors indicates a need to improve data collection and output capabilities. The Division's proposal for upgrades includes converting the existing database into a web-accessible format, purchase of computer hardware, licensing, and GPS receivers for regional staff, with an estimated cost of \$62,500. Uploading screen images from the current application, Hoffmann demonstrated links and data collection processes. If the proposal receives State Board recommendation, staff will prepare an application for LARE funding. Lengthy discussion followed concerning linking with other agency sites, on-going maintenance, use of LARE funds for administrative purposes, built-in expansion capabilities, and other aspects of computer-based data collection and retrieval.

Paul Ehret moved to authorize LARE staff to proceed with an application for a LARE-funded database upgrade, not to exceed \$62,500. The motion was seconded by Travis Nolcox and carried.

State Board members discussed options for use of the \$257,873.48 in unexpended funds from completed and cancelled LARE projects. It was suggested that a similar scheduled review of project status would benefit program fund management.

Garry Tom moved to add \$257,873.48 to the July 2003 allocation for LARE projects. The motion was seconded by Bill Mann and carried.

District Issues

None presented.

Chairman's Report

Pete Hippensteel remarked on the quality presentations at the annual Indiana Lakes Management Conference, April 4-5, at Indianapolis.

Hippensteel stated that he is awaiting word from the Lieutenant Governor's office for a replacement to be named to fill the State Board's current vacancy.

Division of Soil Conservation Director's Report

Harry Nikides provided an update on status of the lake and river enhancement funding bill. If passed the bill would increase the boat registration fee to \$15, with revenues divided equally for dredging actions, exotic weed control, and law enforcement. Paul Ehret noted that, if the bill is passed, the State Board will need to draft policies and guidance on the use of LARE funding for dredging and exotic weed control.

Nikides advised that the Lake Michigan Coastal Program coordinator position vacancy has been announced, and applications are currently being accepted. Nikides introduced Andrea "Andi" Pierce, who has accepted the intermittent projects coordinator position, stationed at Indiana Dunes State Park. The Division will also seek to fill the resource specialist position vacated with Joy Frederick's recent resignation.

The Division's annual staff meeting will be held tomorrow, April 9, at the Greenwood Public Library.

IDEM Report

Watershed management section chief Linda Schmidt reported that approvals have been received from EPA for 25 Section 319 project grants. IDEM staff is currently working with the recipients to complete necessary paperwork.

State Association President's Report

Sherm Bryant reported on various association activities including status of legislation affecting soil and water conservation districts; completion of the IASWCD business plan and committee

assignments; and funding for the information specialist position. The next IASWCD board of directors' meeting is scheduled for July 31.

NRCS State Conservationist's Report

Soil conservationist Susan McLoud, reporting for Jane Hardisty, complimented IASWCD representatives on success of their recent meetings with congressional staff during the NACD Spring Meeting at Washington, DC. NRCS budget information is anticipated by the end of April, and final EQIP rules should become available by May 12. Districts are making excellent progress in developing EQIP ranking criteria. McLoud called attention to the March 29 groundbreaking ceremony for the PL566 Muddy Fork-Silver Creek project, the first new PL566 project in many years. The Indiana State NRCS office will co-host the Midwest Farm Bureau Conference, April 28-May 1, at Indianapolis.

Public Comment

Marion SWCD supervisor Bob Eddleman advised that eight central Indiana soil and water conservation districts and private supporters successfully sponsored a booth at the Annual Flower and Patio Show in March.

Upon an inquiry, Pete Hippensteel advised that no new information is available at this time concerning the recent Porter SWCD audit.

Next Meeting

The next State Soil Conservation Board meeting will be Tuesday, June 10, 2003. There will be no May meeting. LARE staff will present a preliminary report on new project proposals.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:22 a.m.

Minutes recorded by Dorothy Corns

Approved June 10, 2003:

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